

Parmenides and Sense-perception

In: *Revue des Études Grecques*, tome 82, fascicule 389-390, Janvier-juin 1969. pp. 14-32.

Abstract

What did Parmenides understand by the terms λήθεια, ὄν and νοεν, δοκοντα and δόξα ? After reviewing past interpretations of B 1.28-32 (Diels-Kranz), the author suggests that these lines are part of the revelation by the goddess who offers to differentiate between the levels of existence of ὄν and δοκοντα and to assess the status of their resultant states of knowledge λήθεια and δόξα. The conclusion, tested against other fragments, is that λήθεια arises from contemplation (νόος) about being (ὄν) : δοκοντα corresponds to οὐκ στίβ in B 8 but is « non-existent » only in the technical sense that this is not the object of thought. Δόξα is πατηλν only in a technical sense, and there can be right δόξα (first « false » path) which is based exclusively on sensory reality, or wrong δόξα (second « false » path) if sensory objects are confused with being. Parmenides' Theory of Knowledge is then summarised and his cosmology is found to be consistent with it.

Citer ce document / Cite this document :

Clark Raymond J. Parmenides and Sense-perception. In: *Revue des Études Grecques*, tome 82, fascicule 389-390, Janvier-juin 1969. pp. 14-32.

doi : 10.3406/reg.1969.1027

http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/reg_0035-2039_1969_num_82_389_1027

PARMENIDES AND SENSE-PERCEPTION

The object of this paper is to determine the status of δόξα and its relation to εἶν in the fragments of Parmenides, and in the light of the findings to suggest why it was that Parmenides was able to put forward a cosmology of his own without feeling that he was erring as other mortals. No attempt has been made to reconstruct the cosmology itself beyond certain essentials (1), but only to assess the status which Parmenides gave to that cosmology from a study of the use made of the terms ἀλήθεια, εἶν and νοεῖν, δοχοῦντα and δόξα.

The justification of yet another examination of this enigmatic subject is that Parmenides is still inadequately understood. Parmenides (or his goddess) begins by telling us of two ways, the way of "it is" and the way of "it is not" (B 2.3-6. The reader is thus directed to the fragments as cited from the text of Diels-Kranz). Then a third way is announced along which men are steered if, "two-headed", they compromise and believe that "to be and to be-not are the same and not the same". This is the second false path of mortals who "know nothing" (B 6.4-9). In his recent book *Parmenides* (Princeton, 1965), Tarán has set out an interpretation which is in many ways more consistent than that which is maintained by other commentators. From a consideration of ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν (B 8.16. Cf. B 2. 3-6) Tarán concludes that there is no *tertium quid* for Parmenides. Δόξα, since it is not about Being, is therefore totally mistaken; and since there can be no degrees of absolute deception, there can be only one false path. The second part of the poem in which the cosmology is

(1) An excellent summary of the cosmology will be found in W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 1965, ii, 57ff.

given is therefore a dialectical device. This last view has also been recently argued by Owen in a powerful article (*C.Q.x* [1960], 84ff.) and is now generally accepted. With these interpretations I cannot however agree.

I hope to show instead that Parmenides' goddess envisages right and wrong δόξα. This view is, I think, new. Secondly, right δόξα can only have validity if its object has reality. That this is the case is supported from a fresh interpretation of B 1.31-2. Thirdly, I shall give reasons why the goddess, when she gives her cosmology in the second part of the poem (B 8.52f.) does not follow the second false path as described in B 6.4-9 (as is usually held), but the first false path. The traditional view arises from a misunderstanding and involves illogicalities. Before attempting to define the way of δόξα, it is as well to have before us a statement as to the true nature of being, and how it is apprehended.

What is ἔστιν and the way of Ἀλήθεια?

Underlying the dogma that being excludes not-being is the premise that χρῆ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' εἶναι ἕμμεναι · ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι, μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν (B 6.1-2). τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἔστιν τε καὶ εἶναι (B 3) expresses the same thought and, as the γὰρ suggests, perhaps gives the reason why not-being is unknowable and not the true path. For this reason B 3 is often tacked on to B 2. Kirk and Raven (2) translate it as "for the same thing can be thought as can be" or, more literally, "the same thing exists for thinking and for being". This translation, close to Burnet's, rightly takes being as the object of thought. Parmenides seems to mean that "thought is about being". It is important to notice that there is nothing (i.e. no sensible object) intermediate between thought and its object. νοεῖν, for Parmenides, is the direct apprehension of ἔστιν.

In B 2 Parmenides presents a series of arguments which can be summarised as offering a choice between two possibilities: ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν (B 8.16). And because εἶναι excludes τὸ μὴ εἶναι it follows from Parmenides' way of thinking that if ἔστιν is once admitted, then there is no γένεσις or ὄλεθρος, and εἶναι is necessarily πᾶν, ἓν, συνεχές, ἀκίνητον, and οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον (B 8).

(2) G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 269. (Hereafter called simply *K.R.*).

Two important questions should be raised here. First, have we any right to suppose that the alternatives in B 2 are valid for the second part of the poem? Secondly, since νοεῖν is the direct apprehension of ἔστιν without intermediates, can we suppose that νοεῖν and δόξα have a common object? Thought, unlike opinion, is not an account of the sensible world. What then is the object of thought? What exactly is ἔστιν? It is hazardous to guess, but it has been remarked with justice that "even if Parmenides had no clear concept of the incorporeal, it seems pertinent, indeed unavoidable, to ask whether his Being is corporeal or not; just as we may inquire (but seldom do) whether his argument is in fact logical, even if he had no concept of logic." (3) Both questions will be taken up later. Attention will now be turned to the way of Seeming.

The object of δόξα.

The whole of the Proem is claimed by Parmenides as a revelation, for εἰδότες φῶτα in B 1.3 refers to himself. Lines 24 to the end are traditionally taken as the words spoken direct by the goddess to Parmenides, and a crux has long been recognised in 31-32:

χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι
 ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμέσ ἦτορ
 ἥδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἐνί πίστις ἀληθείης.
 ἀλλ' ἔμπης καὶ ταῦτα μαθήσῃ, ὥς τὰ δοκοῦντα
 χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι διὰ παντὸς πάντα περῶντα
 (B 1.28-32).

Difficulty centres not only in explaining how lines 31-2 fit into context, but also in how they are to be translated. Diels (4) emended the adverb δοκίμως to δοκιμῶσ'(αι), an Aorist infinitive equivalent in sense to δοκιμάσαι and translates the ὥς clause as: "how one should test the appearance with regard to their reality". He thus introduces a general rule of procedure into the statement (5). De Vogel accepts Diels' emendation but rightly sees that δοκιμάσαι with the infinitive cannot mean "test" but rather "accept, approve,

(3) I. R. D. Mathewson, *J.H.S.* 87 (1967), 164.

(4) H. Diels, *Parmenides Lehrgedicht*, 59.

(5) For a discussion and criticism of Diels' emendation see Owen, *op. cit.* 86-8.

take for granted" and translates: "Yet you will learn these things also, how a man ought to accept that the world of appearance is (τὰ δοκοῦντα εἶναι), when you go through all." (6) This interpretation makes it an intolerable contradiction that Parmenides should use the existential εἶναι (which is practically a technical term) of δοκοῦντα, when his whole aim is to separate them. This interpretation is therefore to be rejected as being excessively harsh. (7)

Wilamowitz read δοκίμως (with Simplicius) in the sense of "probably". (8) He has been followed by a good many scholars. (9) Kirk and Raven (10) think that δοκίμως means "seemingly" and translate: "how the things that seem, as they all pass through everything, must gain the semblance of being" (After Burnet). If δοκίμως is thus taken to be equivalent to κατὰ δόξαν, Kirk and Raven's translation means nothing less than "you must necessarily be deceived!" There seems little point in that case in learning what the goddess offers. Owen (11) rightly asserts that δοκίμως means quite the reverse, "really, truly, genuinely", and this is always the meaning where δοκίμως is attested elsewhere (Aeschylus, *Persae*, 547; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1.6.7). The foregoing translation will not do therefore, and Owen translates: "how the things-that-seem had to have genuine existence." (12)

This translation suggested to Owen a new interpretation. The ταῦτα had been taken to refer to the previous line meaning, "the contents of mortal opinions", which the goddess will tell Parmenides from second-hand. According to the received view the ὥς clause is the goddess' own comment on mortal opinions reported at

(6) C. J. de Vogel, *Gk. Phil.* i, 37 n. 1. [Where δοκιμῶς' is read, περῶντα is Masc. Acc. Sing. agreeing with the unstated subject of the verb δοκιμῶσαι which is τίνα.]

(7) The objection against de Vogel applies also against M. Untersteiner (*Parmenide*, 1958, CLXVII n. 7) and Falus (*A.A.* 8 [1960], 285) who also give δοκοῦντα absolute reality.

(8) Wilamowitz, *Hermes*, 34 (1899), 204.

(9) E. g. Kranz in his fifth ed. of *Die Fragmente*, 230; G. Calogero, *Studi sull' 'Eleatismo*, 31 n. 1; O. Gigon, *Der Ursprung*, 247.

(10) *KR.* 267 cf. 268 n. 2. [Where δοκίμως is read, περῶντα is Neut. Nom. Pl. agreeing with δοκοῦντα].

(11) Owen, *op. cit.* 86.

(12) *Ibid.* 88.

first-hand, saying how appearances can have existence, or how they can be tested, or whatever. Owen rightly objected that the goddess would be the last person to admit any existence to the *δοχοῦντα*. He suggests instead that the *ὥς* clause also is at second-hand like the *ταῦτα* it elaborates, and gives the mortal viewpoint reported by the goddess as though she were speaking *in loco hominis*. (13)

Old snags now give way to new. Mortals would surely not themselves describe their own world as *τὰ δοχοῦντα*, which is here practically a technical term contrasted with *ἔόν*. And if we accept this interpretation at B 1.31-2, then presumably the goddess speaks *in loco hominis* at B 8.50f. also. But this cannot be, for in B 8.60-1 the goddess tells Parmenides that she has told him everything so that he will not be outdone—an indication that she has been speaking in her own name, and, incidentally, a fulfilment of her undertaking at B 1.31-2. There is, moreover, one fatal objection to Owen's interpretation. Why should the goddess teach Parmenides mortal opinions from a mortal viewpoint, when Parmenides is a mortal himself and is perfectly capable of finding out for himself what mortals think?

We are forced back into the position of accepting the *ὥς* clause as part of the goddess' revelation: but we are in a notorious deadlock, for we have shown that it cannot be the goddess' own comment (which contradicts her views about *ἔστιν*) and it cannot be a mere reporting of mortal opinions from mortals' viewpoint (for that teaches Parmenides nothing). Fortunately there is another explanation so simple that it surprises me that it has been missed. The couplet is part of the revelation in which the goddess tells Parmenides something that neither he nor his predecessors know about "human opinions". Here, for the first time in philosophical thought, *δόξαι* is used as a technical term in contrast with *Ἀλήθεια* (i.e. *ἐπιστήμη*) to denote a kind of knowledge which is to be differentiated from that obtained through *νόος*, which is divine

[13] The phrase is mine, but it perfectly catches the status of these lines according to Owen: "The only people who can say of the *δοχοῦντα* that and how they *δοξίμως* exist are the mortals who believe in them (B 8.38), not the goddess." (*ibid.* 88).

understanding. (14) The goddess is therefore saying more than that she will teach Parmenides the content of what other men think. In 31-2 the goddess introduces a new concept where with to describe and define human understanding, and she undertakes to assess its reliability. We will break the ὥς clause into an analysis of its various parts in order to substantiate this interpretation.

The meaning of τὰ δοκοῦντα is not easy to determine. We can however discount Wilamowitz' rendering as "die Hypothesen", (15) which is rather an interpretation than a translation. Nevertheless many commentators, while not going so far as actually to give Wilamowitz' translation, assume this to be the meaning. (16) What then can τὰ δοκοῦντα mean? Can we equate the δοκοῦντα with βροτῶν δόξας, as some commentators do, (17) or is this to confuse the physical *objects* which are the object of sense-perception, with the resultant *understanding* which is based on a study of the phenomenal world? On philological grounds there seems no sure way of deciding. The expression τὰ δοκοῦντα as it occurs in Aristotle (*Mel.* 1088^a16) is given by *LS.J*⁹ to mean "an established current opinion", and an examination of the usages of δοκέω without a following εἶναι might incline us to expect the δοκοῦντα to mean "opinions". Heraclitus indeed appears to have used δοκέοντα (B 28) in the sense of δόξαι, but the text is too uncertain for us to make sure deductions. If the δοκοῦντα are equivalent to δόξαι, the translation might go: "how opinions must hold good in a reliable fashion". That is one possibility.

(14) Xenophanes had indicated the distinction as follows: τὸ...σαφὲς οὐτις ἄνθρωπος ἵδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται εἰδὼς... · δόκος δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται (B 34). If πᾶσιν is neuter, then 'seeming' is wrought over everything; if masculine, then it is a faculty of men. Xenophanes uses the striking phrase οἱ βροτοὶ δοκέουσι (B 14 cf. B 35) from which Parmenides may have derived his βροτῶν δόξας in B 1.30; similarly the last phrase of B 34 quoted above may have been the model for the equally ambiguous last part of Parmenides B 1.32. The 'seeming' which limits human understanding is contrasted with God's mental contemplation (B 23 and 25), though He sees and hears also (B 24). Xenophanes adds, however, that the gods have not revealed their knowledge (B 18 cf. 34 above). Parmenides has gone one better. He has received that revelation and knows truth as well as opinion. The goddess will need to elaborate the differences.

(15) *Hermes*, 34 (1899), 204-5.

(16) See below, n. 29.

(17) E.g. W. J. Verdenius, *Parmenides*, 49-50; L. Tarán confuses the matter in his *Parmenides*, 214.

The other possibility is that τὰ δοκοῦντα are equivalent to what a later age called τὰ φαινόμενα, which refers to the phenomenal world. No precise parallels for this appear in *LSJ*⁹ but the meaning would not be difficult to derive from passages such as Simonides' fr.76 (τὸ δοκεῖν καὶ τὰν ἀλάθειαν βιάται=schol. on Eur. *Or.* 236) where, as in the Parmenides passage, seeming is opposed to reality. It is not easy to mediate between these two possibilities. What is certain is that even if the δοκοῦντα are equivalent to δόξαι, they are opinions about the nature of the phenomenal world, as shown by both the content of the second part of the poem and the words of the goddess at B 8.60-1:

τόν σοι ἐγὼ διάκοσμον ἐοικότα πάντα φατίζω,
ὥς οὐ μή ποτέ τίς σε βροτῶν γνώμη παρελάσση.

We may take it from this remark that the goddess speaks about the world as revealed through sense-perception in such a way that no mortal thought will ever outstrip Parmenides. The tantalising difficulty with B 8.60-1 is that we do not know whether Parmenides will never be outstripped by mortals because his δόξα is better than their δόξαι (viz. does Parmenides compete with mortals on their own terms?) or because their δόξαι can always be met by his views of ἐόν as apprehended through νόος. The view we take on this point affects our general interpretation of the purpose of the *Doxa*; viz. whether or not it is dialectical. This aspect is further discussed in the next section.

Whether τὰ δοκοῦντα mean "things-that-seem" or "received opinions" the force of the δοκίμως is significant, and implies that the goddess will rectify past and current notions. Either she undertakes to explain how the "received opinions" ought *really* to be, or she will teach what sort of existence must *really* be assigned to "phenomena"—and the force of the δοκίμως, particularly with B 8.60-1 in mind, is to show that she offers to correct human understanding of the phenomenal world.

Owen (18) rightly says that tense of χρῆν must be taken to show "that this is how things inevitably were from the start", but we should note that Parmenides' predecessors had not always understood them so to be. So the sense is: But still (even though

(18) *Op. cit.* 89

mortal opinions are unreliable) you shall learn these things also (which I shall tell you), namely how the things-that-seem/opinions ought really to have been (for all mortals).

The final phrase of B 1.32 may now be considered. διὰ παντὸς πάντα περ ὄντα (which is in apposition to τὰ δοκοῦντα) is usually objected to on the ground that the goddess would then be saying that appearances are everything; (19) so περὶ ὄντα is read for περ ὄντα despite the fact that the best MSS of Simplicius (*de Caelo*, DEF) read περ ὄντα, while only A has περὶ ὄντα. I see no good grounds for rejecting the best MSS (20) for, in the phenomenal world, phenomena *are* everything and everywhere. This is not to assert that phenomena have the same kind of existence as Being; for Being is πᾶν and ἓν, while phenomena are πάντα and therefore many. If the δοκοῦντα mean opinions, it is not easy to understand how they can be said to pass through everything or indeed all be everywhere. For this reason I think it likelier than not that τὰ δοκοῦντα in B 1-31 mean the commonsense world of experience (cf. B 1.3-4), though the goddess' re-assessment of this brings with it, as will be seen, an improved δόξα. The rendering of "opinions" cannot therefore be entirely ruled out. (21)

If τὰ δοκοῦντα refer to the phenomenal world, that εἶναι is used in conjunction with it means that phenomena, at least in some sense, exist. (22) The interpretation of B 1.31-2, as so far advanced is sufficient to repudiate Owen's view that the goddess is reporting mortal opinions from the mortal viewpoint, for that mortal δόξαι are about the δοκοῦντα, and not about reality, mortals, bound as they are within the confines of their own world, could not know themselves.

If, however, the δοκοῦντα do mean "opinions", Owen's objection that the goddess would be the last person to admit any existence to

(19) Tarán, *op. cit.* 214 n. 32. Owen, however, keeps the better reading (*op. cit.* 88-9) but for different reasons from mine.

(20) Nor should we accept the reading *because* it is found in the best MSS. It has its difficulties because ὄντα is strange for Parmenides. The form ἐόντα would be expected. This is perhaps a reason why περὶ ὄντα was conjectured.

(21) In the following pages I use the term δοκοῦντα as equivalent to 'phenomenal objects' without wishing to imply that the rendering 'opinions' in B 1.31 is impossible.

(22) Cf. n. 42 below.

the *δοκοῦντα* is rendered superfluous. Nobody would deny that there are such things as opinions.

To be sure, three specific arguments could be advanced against acceptance of this interpretation so far—all of them common misunderstandings. First, it is not generally recognised that Parmenides envisages true and false Belief, (23) but we shall find presently that the distinction is made and is related to the difference between the first and second false paths. Secondly, it is generally thought that the argument *ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν* (B 8.16) leads to the conclusion that the sensible world can have *no existence whatever*. (24) Admittedly, as far as *νόος* is concerned, only being exists, but we shall show presently that Parmenides means only that sensibles do not exist *for thinking*. Thirdly, most commentators insist that the *ὥς* clause makes sense only if *εἶναι* is understood in the existential sense. (25) Since the goddess offers to explain how phenomena are, we should wait for her explanation of « *εἶναι* » which in this passage is in any case surely non-committal.

Are all δόξαι untrue?

The interpretation so far reached needs to be tested against other fragments. But first of all one cannot help wondering what Parmenides can have meant by saying that the opinions of mortals lack *πίστις ἀληθής*, “sure trust” or “true conviction”.

There is a present growing tendency (26) towards the view that the *Doxa* (i.e. the cosmological part of the poem—B 8.50ff.) is without real merit. This view is reached from the following considerations. (a) There is no “sure trust” in *δόξα*; (b) this is because the world of experience is absolutely unreal; (c) *δόξα* must therefore be absolute deceit; (d) to the problem why, if *δόξα* is deceptive, Parmenides then added the cosmological part of his

(23) Cf. A. H. Coxon, *C.Q.* 28 (1934), 141 : « Parmenides... had failed to see that the peculiarity of Belief is not that it cannot be true, but that it can be false. »

(24) Tarán, *op. cit.* 202, 210. See 210 n. 19 and cf. 39-40 for the view that besides being and not-being there is no *tertium quid*. Cf. the phrase « non-existent phenomena » in *K.R.* 279.

(25) See Tarán, *op. cit.* 213 and n. 30; Owen's criticism (*op. cit.* 87) of Diels' interpretation of *εἶναι* in a copulative role does not apply here for we are not reading Diels' text.

(26) For an opposed tendency see below, n. 34.

poem, a number of explanations have been suggested. Perhaps, so it is said, Parmenides presented the views of his predecessors (27) or his own former beliefs (28) with the eristic purpose of attacking and so contrasting them with his own doctrine of truth. Or, perhaps, he set forth the opinions as though he maintained them, whether based on others or an original creation of his own, simply as a kind of hypothesis to show how the world is to be explained (even though actually unreal)—some would say that the explanation is the best possible or most probable—if one were to start from the wrong, empirical standpoint. (29) Or, finally, the second part bears logical relationship to the first part and is therefore a dialectical device to criticise and reduce empirical knowledge to its basic mistake thereby showing that his views of $\epsilon\acute{o}\nu$ are left true. (30)

None of these explanations is satisfactory. First, if Parmenides is giving a polemic review of popular beliefs, whose beliefs is he reviewing? For they are certainly not the views of the Pythagoreans (31). Secondly, if $\delta\delta\xi\alpha$ is a mistaken account based on a false hypothesis of an unreal world, it is difficult to see how there can be a correct, or most probable, mistaken account (32). Even

(27) Diels (Parmenides combined the best doctrines known to him) *op. cit.* 63; Burnet (Parmenides represented the Pythagoreans), *Early Gk. Phil.*, 182-5; Nestle (a synthesis of views) *Z.N.* 733-5.

(28) F. Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden*, Herausg. von K. Schlechta, 111, München 1956, 381.

(29) Under this broad division, within which are many variations, I would include Wilamowitz, *op. cit.* 204-5; Zeller, *Z.N.* 723-6; Patin, *Parmenides etc.*, 499 ff.; Gomperz, *Griechische Denker*, I, 147 f., Kranz, *S.B.B.A.* 47 (1916), 1169-72; Croissant, *Le début etc.* 102; Albertelli, *Gli Eleati*, 127; Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 48f.; Coxon *C.Q.* 28 (1934), 134f.; *K.R.* 279ff.; Pasquinnelli, *I Presocratici*, 395 f. In so far as $\delta\delta\xi\alpha$, for some of these scholars, is the best hypothesis, it has some merit; but see n. 32 below.

(30) Reinhardt, *Parmenides*, 24-6, 29-31; Owen, *op. cit.* 89; Tarán, *op. cit.* 209, 226f.; Long, *Phronesis*, 8 (1963), 105 f. who emphasises the didactic nature of the device.

(31) We find no mention of Pythagorean doctrines of Limit and Unlimited, nor are things equated with numbers. *E contra* the doctrine of $\sigma\tau\epsilon\phi\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\iota$, found in Parmenides, is not to be found in Pythagoreanism. Cf. *K.R.* 279-80, and see p. 29 below.

(32) Coxon, *C.Q.* 28 (1934), 134-44 may be used to illustrate such an illogical position. He says that 'in its proper place $\delta\delta\xi\alpha$ is both valuable and necessary' (135) and his general thesis requires him to assume some reality for the phenomenal world (142). Yet he says that the *Doxa* is a collection of hypotheses, laid down *as true*, and strung together in an arbitrary manner (139), and that the object of $\delta\delta\xi\alpha$, Becoming, has 'no status at all' (141 n. 1). Nor then has $\delta\delta\xi\alpha$!

if there were, to give it seems pointless. And, thirdly, if Parmenides produced the cosmological part simply to show where empirical knowledge is mistaken, what does he gain by giving it at such length? For he has already admirably proved his case. The dialectic view is, moreover, anachronistic and anticipates the method of Dialectic not used on Aristotle's admission until Zeno (33). But the chief error of these interpretations is that they regard the phenomenal world as unreal and therefore do not show how δόξα can have any validity at all (34).

In the light of the interpretation of B 1.31-2 suggested in the previous section of this paper, I believe that Parmenides in B 1.30 is saying: (a) place no sure trust in δόξα for the technical reason that the senses and not νόος are used; (b) I cannot explain the existence of the δοκοῦντα through νόος; (c) but even with the technical reservation that there is no sure trust in δόξα, there may still be right or wrong δόξα *as far as δόξα can be right*; (d) therefore

(33) Diog. Laert. VIII, 57: 'Αριστοτέλης δ' ἐν τῷ Σοφιστῇ φησι πρῶτον Ἐμπεδοκλέα ῥητορικὴν εὐρεῖν, Ζήνωνα δὲ διαλεκτικὴν (Cf. *Met.* 987^b 32 f. and 1078^b 25-30; Plato, *Parm.* 127d-128e). It can be said that Aristotle must mean that Zeno, starting from commonsense principles and proceeding in dialogue-form, was the first to construct chains of reasoning designed specifically to refute a given position—which would not exclude Parmenides' δόξαι being a « dialectical » move in a wider sense. I personally however cannot bring myself to regard the *Doxa* as dialectical, even in a wider sense, for reasons given in the text.

(34) Some commentators, it is true, accord the world of δόξα a measure of reality when it suits. For the illogical position of the « hypothesis people » see note 32 above. For the views of Untersteiner, Falus, and de Vogel see note 7 above. Untersteiner (*op. cit.* CLXIX) asserts that the way of truth and opinion are one and the same, their difference being in the study of reality in terms of atemporality and temporality respectively, for which there is little evidence (see Coxon, *op. cit.* 139-40). Tarán (*op. cit.* 210 n. 17) names Riezler (*Parmenides*, 44 f.) among those who think that Parmenides attached some kind of reality to the world described in the *Doxa*. But Riezler, *loc. cit.*, says: « Mental attitudes are being distinguished, not worlds set in order. » So for Riezler Parmenides was not really interested in the cosmological world as such. Riezler thus reflects Reinhardt, *op. cit.* 25 f., who thought that Parmenides was forced to use physical concepts (albeit his own) in the interests of logic, simply because he was unable to imagine mental things as having an existence of their own. The best explanation yet offered is by Verdenius (*op. cit.*, 59) who interprets εἰκότα in B 8.60 to imply « a shadow of Truth, not ultimate knowledge » and by Guthrie (*op. cit.* 75) who uses the analogy of the dream-world to the real world to illustrate the relation between δόξα and ἀλήθεια.. These commentators both represent an opposing tradition.

hear my *δόξα* which is correct *as compared with Heraclitus, the Pythagoreans, and others*.

If opinions were not *in some sense true*, and if the phenomenal world did not really exist *in some sense*, then B 1.28-32 would be nonsense even if 31-2 were spoken only from the mortal viewpoint. When the goddess undertook to teach Parmenides how the phenomenal world really (*δοξίμως*) exists she undertook to give both (1) a differentiation between the levels of existence of *έόν* and *δοκοῦντα*, and (2) a correct description of *δόξα*, correct *qua* *δόξα*.

The fragment B 1.28-32 is thus important for showing the distinction between the new path of Truth according to which the goddess teaches that *έόν* is directly apprehended through *νόος*, and the path of Seeming, as followed by mortals, according to which the goddess promises to give a correct assessment of the world as it appears to the senses. I submit that the *δόξαι* are Parmenides' own (35), that they are correct, and that they lack sure trust only because they are not about the intelligible world. This interpretation may help to shed a little fresh light on these difficult lines.

No study of *δόξα* would be complete without consideration of the vexed lines B 8.53-4:

μορφὰς γὰρ κατέθεντο δύο γνώμας ὀνομάζειν,
τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεῶν ἔστιν — ἐν ᾧ πεπλανημένοι εἰσὶν —

These lines are parallel to B 1.31-2 because in B 1.31-2 the goddess announces her intentions to explain the phenomenal world, and in B 53-4 she actually begins her teaching.

To my mind Aristotle is responsible for much consequent confusion here when he says that Parmenides ranked hot or fire under being, cold or earth under not-being (36). Zeller was led to believe that the error of mortals lay in naming the second form, "night", instead of the first, "fire" (37), and translated the *τῶν*

(35) This too is what all the ancient commentators believed. Cf. *Simpl. Phys.* 30, 14; *Arist. Met.* 986b 31; *Theophr. Phys. Op.* fr. 6 ap. *Alex. in Met.* 31, 12 (D.K. 28 A.7).

(36) *Met.* 987a 1: κατὰ μὲν τὸ ὄν τὸ θερμὸν τάττει, θάτερον δὲ κατὰ τὸ μὴ ὄν. *De gen. corr.* 318b 6: τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν εἶναι φάσκων πῦρ καὶ γῆν.

(37) *Z.N.* 701.

clause as "von denen die eine nicht angenommen werden sollte" (38). This interpretation is inadmissible because fire and night are alike physical forms (*μορφαί*) (39), which both contradict the attributes of being. Cornford (40) therefore translates: "of which it is not right to name (so much as) one", because both forms are wrong. But the condemnation of both "forms" comes in the *ἐν ᾧ* clause which his translation of the *τῶν* clause thus makes redundant.

I therefore accept a third translation of *τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεὼν ἔστιν* and believe that it is Parmenides' declaration that he will not hold wrong *δόξα*: the *ἐν ᾧ* clause is Parmenides' declaration that *δόξα* is deceptive when compared with *ἀλήθεια*. The sense therefore is: "They made up their minds to name two forms, of which it is not right to name only one (says the goddess in distinguishing right from wrong *δόξα*)—that is where they have gone astray (says the goddess who, from the point of view of Truth, condemns both "forms") (41).

Assessment and Summary.

The world of *δόξα* is composed of *μορφαί* which mortals name—names such as fire and night, or book and tree. Yet—and here we pick up the arguments in the second section of this paper—these things are equated with that which is-not (B 2.7; 7.1; 8.7 and 12). And yet if the *δοκοῦντα* were utter nothingness, as Tarán would have us believe, nothing at all could be predicated of them (42)—nor could names even be mentioned. For Parmenides

[38] Z.N. 703 n. 2: The *ἐν ᾧ* clause appears then as a comment on the *τῶν* clause.

[39] *μορφαί* (in this context) surely means *physical* forms. «Naming» things surely means naming sensibles like fire and night. For this reason I cannot believe that *ἓόν* counts as a *μορφή* which can be named.

[40] C.Q. 27 (1933), 108 and *Plato and Parmenides*, 46.

[41] The translation is based on K.R. 278, but the interpretation is very different.

[42] It is true that *δοκοῦντα* correspond to *οὐκ ἔστιν* but I shall argue that this only distinguishes them from the object of thought. Nor can I agree with K.R. 270 that Parmenides attacks those who make a negative predication by himself confusing the existential and predicative uses of the verb «to be»; for *ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν* does not surely present a choice between «it is so-and-so, e.g. white» and «it is not something else, e.g. black». See Owen, *op. cit.* 94 n. 1 for further discussion. I suggest that Parmenides employs the existential usage consistently in the *νοεῖν* passages but, as mortals are

fire exists *qua* fire, and it therefore cannot be right to think that δόξαι are about “non-existent phenomena” (43). Parmenides must mean that sensibles exist *qua* sensibles, but *they do not exist for thinking*. This is surely the point of B 2.7: οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ εἶν —followed perhaps by B 3 as a further explanation (Cf. e.g. B 8.8f.). When Parmenides therefore says that the path of not-being is παναπευθέα (B 2.6), he means, quite literally, that it is “altogether inconceivable”. That the goddess teaches Parmenides ὡς τὰ δοκοῦντα (now shown to be equivalent to τὸ μὴ εἶν) (44) χρῆν δοκίμως εἶναι means that the goddess does recognise another kind of reality. It is as though Parmenides distinguishes between sensory reality and rational reality. Simplicius was right to remark that in the second part of the poem Parmenides had passed ἀπὸ τῶν νοητῶν ἐπὶ τὰ αἰσθητά, “from intelligible to sensible objects”. We have, moreover, no firm evidence, so far as I can tell, that Parmenides identified the sphere of reality with the phenomenal world. Moreover νοεῖν actually by-passed sensory objects. Parmenides may thus have distinguished between the objects of *Aletheia* and *Doxa*, as Plato (*Rep.* 477-80) implies a difference in kind between the objects of belief and those of knowledge. Parmenides may have envisaged two kinds of worlds, as Plato in the *Phaedrus* (247C ff.) regarded reality as existing in the outer region beyond heaven and as visible only to νοῦς. At least, if it the same world, Parmenides is describing it in two aspects. The latter could only be known by leaving the beaten track of men and passing outside beyond the gates of Night and Day (B 1.1-28) (45). This may explain why

went, sometimes predicatively in the *Doxa*. Hence perhaps in B 1. 31-2 and also B. 19.1: οὕτω τοι κατὰ δόξαν ἔφω τάδε καὶ νυν ἑάσι. Hence also the undoubtedly copular use in B 8.57. Parmenides did not analyse the consequences of the two usages.

(43) Cf. *K.R.* 279.

(44) Cf. Eur. *Troad.* 613 where τὰ δοκοῦντα seems contrasted with τὰ μὴδὲν ὄντα.

(45) This passage might well be added to the poetic and philosophic antecedents named by J. D. P. Bolton as foreshadowing Aristeas' journey in the soul (*Aristeus of Proconnesus*, Oxford 1962, 146ff. Bolton denies that the shamanist interpretation found in Maximus of Tyre X.2f. underlies Herodotus iv.13f.). Whether the proem is itself an early example of shamanism is disputed (see Tarán, *op. cit.* 22f.), but it is at least a metaphorical flight of the imagination—even if Parmenides remained body and soul on earth—and as such deserves to be linked with Pindar *OL.* 6.22f. and fr. 302 (ed. Bowra = Plato *Theaet.* 173E) as contributing to the notion of ἔκστασις proper.

Parmenides did not seek to relate "phenomena" to "reality". It was left for Plato to find logical justification for what Parmenides implied. This comes in the *Sophist* where the Stranger says that not-being in some sense does exist (τό τε μὴ ὄν ὡς ἔστι κατὰ τι καὶ τὸ ὄν αὖ πάλιν ὡς οὐκ ἔστι πη 241D.)—an idea already implied in the μεταξὺ passage of the *Republic* (477-80). Parmenides wrote the two parts of the poem without formulating logically what the two parts implied. When he included physics alongside metaphysics he contradicted logical commonsense; Plato showed that logical commonsense was wrong.

The question arises why, if Parmenides recognised two levels of existence, he asserted the superiority of intelligible over sensible reality. Surely, it may be argued, if he was an honest man, he should have admitted the two levels side by side. To answer this one would need knowledge of the man himself, but it may be remarked that when people are different from other people, as Parmenides was different from other mortals, they are wont to assume that they are therefore better. And Parmenides' intelligible world, being a novel concept, was no doubt regarded by him as a superior one. That explains why he counted it as revelation; and he placed the responsibility for it upon the goddess.

The virtue of the discovery was that Parmenides was enabled to set out a systematic Theory of Knowledge. This will now be summarised.

Parmenides' Theory of Knowledge is a realisation that δόξα is a different kind of understanding from that resulting from νοεῖν. The distinction is Parmenides' contribution to philosophy.

It is a recognition that δόξα and νοεῖν start from different objects of study, phenomena (αἰσθητά) and reality (νοητά) respectively. Although Heraclitus accused Pythagoras of pursuing πολυμαθίη (B 129.cf.40), a mere "collection of facts", he himself laboured under the misleading impression that the ultimate qualitative εἶν which underlies physical πάντα (B 10 and 50) could be understood by observing sensibles (B 55) and merely applying φρόνησις as a check (cf. B 107). This, to Parmenides' mind, was folly.

It is a recognition also that the methods proper to each are different. Ἀλήθεια is a contemplative method which, by contemplating ἔστιν, enables direct apprehension through νόος of the

nature of $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\omicron}\nu$. This is the goddess' way. $\Delta\acute{\omicron}\xi\alpha$, the way of mortals, proceeds the moment one starts "naming" things, i.e. through the medium of sense-perception ($\alpha\iota\sigma\theta\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$). Like the Pythagoreans and Alcmaeon, Parmenides insists that the world of change is correctly understood only when both opposites are "named", as against all those, like Heraclitus, who had run into difficulties by trying to generate opposites out of a single $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta$. Unlike the Pythagoreans, however, who themselves confused being and not-being, Parmenides will not use intelligible terms (like Limit) of sensible objects: he selects a primary pair of perceptible manifestations, "light" and "night" (46). In other words the procedure must be carried out in its own terms.

Finally, it is a recognition that knowledge resulting from νοεῖν and δόξα are incompatible, and that the second is deceptive.

Two final points remain to be settled. First, does the goddess in the *Doxa* set forth the same way of enquiry which she has denounced in B 6.4-9 and B 7.1-5? The answer arises naturally out of the interpretation which I have already given. Because Heraclitus, like others, started from sense-perception, he confused being and not-being and ended up with a false understanding of being together with a mistaken view of the sensible world. This is what it meant to follow the *second* false path of *ignorant* mortals (B 6.4-9). Parmenides would not class himself with βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδέν (B 6.4), and this gives point to B 8.60-61. The *Doxa* sets forth βροτῶν δόξαι in the sense that it is knowledge based on the senses, but it is an improved and correct *Doxa* and, unlike that of other mortals who know nothing, it is based on the *first* false path of enquiry (B 6.1-3, and the only alternative in B 2.7 (47); 8.7 and 12). It is improved and correct because it accurately takes account of the phenomenal world only, as is proper, and does not mistake being for not-being, viz. intelligible for sensible objects (48). That is why the goddess' *Doxa* is a true understanding

(46) *K.R.* 280-1.

(47) F. M. Cornford, *C.Q.* 27 (1933), 99 is wrong to say that the goddess intended to mention the third way in B 2. And she certainly does not in B 8.

(48) The vast majority of commentators say that the *Doxa* follows a second false way (e.g. Reinhardt, *op. cit.* 69; Zeller, *Z.N.* 701; Cornford, *C.Q.* 27 [1933], 100 and *Plato and Parm.* 33; Coxon, *op. cit.* 134f.; Verdenius, *op. cit.* 52ff.; Gigon, *op. cit.* 258; Owen, *op. cit.* 84 n. 1). Paradoxically some (e.g. Verdenius,

of the phenomenal world (which does not exist for thinking) (49).

The second point is this. Before giving her own cosmology the goddess warns Parmenides that he will hear κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλὸν (B 8.52), the "deceitful ordering of my words". Is an interpretation which claims that the goddess gives a correct account of the phenomenal world consistent with what the goddess here says? I believe that it is. We should be careful to remember that ἀπατηλὸν means "deceitful" and not "wrong". The goddess' *Doxa* is only deceitful so far as the world of phenomena is deceitful, and here we may detect a pun on the word κόσμον. The goddess gives a genuine interpretation of the sensory world and the truth of her explanation is as great as the objects of her explanation are true. In short, I submit that Parmenides called himself an εἰδότα φῶτα because through revelation he was able to recognise sensory and rational reality for what each is (50), and because his knowledge of the sensory world was unsurpassable. By contrast, βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν confused τὸ πέλσειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι and by so following the second false path had neither ἀλήθεια nor proper δόξαι.

56; Coxon, 140) say that Parmenides, unlike other men, distinguished his grounds when he followed the second false way of enquiry. This makes nonsense of the distinction between the two false paths—for once the grounds are distinguished, both paths come to the same thing anyway. One reason which has militated against accepting the first false path is the feeling that a study of not-being is preposterous and presumably the second false path is considered an improvement on the first because it has some εἶναι to take account of! Coxon, 134-5, accordingly thinks that Parmenides distinguished between the 'Way of Notbeing' and the 'Way of Belief', evidently thinking, without good evidence, that not-being cannot be the object of δόξα. Tarán, *op. cit.* 228, is at least consistent when he says that since phenomena are completely unreal and there are no degrees of unreality for Parmenides, there can be only one false way. This will not square with the two false ways mentioned in B 6.1-9. That Parmenides followed the first false path is held by e.g. Kranz, *S.S.B.A.* 47 (1916), 1174-76; Calogero, *op. cit.* 32f.; Burnet, *E.G.P.* 184. Kranz, *loc. cit.*, distorts the sense by claiming that the first false path asserts the presence of being as well as not-being!

(49) τὰ δοχοῦντα in the sense of 'opinions' in B 1.31 would of course be consistent with this view of the *Doxa*.

(50) An important consequence of this interpretation is that the view that 'nobody believed in different degrees of reality before Plato' (adapted from Tarán, *op. cit.*, 221 n. 51) can no longer be maintained.

POSTSCRIPT

If the foregoing interpretation of δόξα is correct, then Parmenides as a cosmologist must be re-assessed. When Burnet said that "we need not therefore believe they (the cosmological ideas in the second part) were taken very seriously" (51); when Raven says that "it is fortunate that, *since he neither believed in it himself...* Parmenides' astronomical system is of little importance" (52); when Tarán says that it does not matter "whose this cosmology is... for Parmenides the phenomenal world is non-existent" (53); when Owen says that "Parmenides did not write as a cosmologist" (54); there is failure to understand *Doxa*. True, the sensory world is rated as deceptive in contrast to the intelligible world, but correct δόξα is like εἰκῶς μῦθος, (as Plato —in imitation, as I believe, of the Parmenidean concept — in the *Timaeus* calls his own cosmology) (55), namely it is a true account of the world of αἰσθησις.

Because Parmenides had distinguished the object of δόξα and νοεῖν so carefully, he could describe Justice as "the primary cause of movement and becoming" (<ἀρχήν> τε καὶ <αἰτίαν> κινήσεως καὶ γενέσεως Aetius 2,7,1), because that is how the world appears to the senses to work. *E contra* when he thinks of what νόος teaches about εἶν, he denies any movement (εἶν is ἀκίνητον B 8.26) or becoming (εἰ γὰρ ἐγενετ', οὐκ ἔστ' B 8.20); and of Justice

(51) Burnet, *E.G.P.*¹ 182 (these words were removed from the 4th ed. but Burnet's view remained substantially the same), which may be taken as representative of those who think that the second part is polemical.

(52) *K.R.* 284, which may fairly sum up the views of those who hold that the second part is a hypothetical portrayal of unreal phenomena (my italics).

(53) Tarán, *op. cit.* 89, which speaks for the views of those who think that the second part is a « dialectical device ».

(54) Owen, *op. cit.* 101.

(55) Plato, *Tim.* 29d. For the view that Plato intends the εἰκῶς μῦθος as a scientific explanation and not simply an analogy διδασκαλίας χλάριν (Xenocrates), see Aristotle, *De Caelo* 279, who points out that geometric constructions do not alter things, whereas Plato's Creation involves change (from ἀταξία to τάξις) and cannot therefore be simply an analogy or visual aid.

he says that it "looseth not her fetters to allow it [Being] to come into being or to perish, but holdeth it fast" (οὐτε γενέσθαι οὐτ' ὀλλυσθαι ἀνῆκε Δίκη χαλάσασα πέδησιν, ἀλλ' ἔχει . B 8.13-5) (56).

Raymond J. CLARK.

University of Exeter,
Devon (England)

(56) I wish here to record my gratitude both to Mr. E. L. Hussey for a most valuable discussion and for helpful written comments on this article in draft form, and also to Mr. I. R. D. Mathewson whose perspicacity gave me as good an introduction to the Presocratics as one could wish. Naturally I am alone responsible for the views here presented.
